

LESSON

3.1

Documentary in Canada



Learning Objective:

Examine the genre of documentary film and explore the value and challenges of this genre; become familiar with some Canadian documentaries

Curriculum Strand:

Inquiry, Media Literacy (English), Analysis (Drama, Media Arts)

Materials Needed:

- Class set of Handout 3.1.1 - Journal
- Class set of Handout 3.1.2 - Documentary Report

Journal:

Class time for Journal Handout 3.1.1

Think of all the interesting people, situations, challenges, and injustices that you come across in a day - what would make an interesting documentary? Expand on one example by expressing what the documentary might feature about that topic.

Game/Activity: The Role of the Storyteller

1. This game will require a few different newspapers for the class to work with.
2. Introduce the concept of a documentary: a film that documents reality. Ask students if a documentary can really tell the "truth"?
3. Divide the class into small groups and divide the newspapers (or sections if you only have one paper) among the groups. Ask the groups to find a story in the newspaper that is interesting and based on an event, trend, or incident that is real and has really happened.
4. Have the groups write a summary of the story in three short sentences.
5. Now have the groups write two other short summaries of the same event, but from a different angle, changing the story, but maintaining the truth. The key is to think of the facts from someone else's "truth". For example, a story about a logging company clearing a forest could be summarized as: a) Logging company clear cuts forest and devastates habitat for many important species. b) Logging company finally cleans up land that will be perfect for much-needed new neighbourhood. c) Logging company delights shareholders with a rise in stock today as pre-sales for townhouses hit an all-time high.



6. Have each group share their three summaries and have the other groups write down which story they believe was summarized from the actual article.
7. After all the groups have presented, have each group reveal the “real” story that they initially summarized. The group that guessed the most correct answers wins.
8. Emphasize that the person making the documentary is sometimes just as important and influential as the subject. The director and editor choose the story to tell.

Content/Lesson: Documentary Search

1. Distribute **Handout 3.1.2** - Documentary Report.
2. The National Film Board of Canada (NFB) is one of this country's premiere producers of documentary film. Please see **Prep Guide 4** for more information about the NFB. Students should watch two or more Canadian documentaries online at www.nfb.ca. The documentaries vary in length, so students should watch at least 30 minutes of documentaries.

For each documentary, students fill out the report to name the film maker, the subject of the documentary, the aim or goal of the documentary, and the possible viewpoint or bias that the documentary presents. Students will also include a personal response to the documentary and think about what makes the documentary Canadian.

If students do not have access to a computers, consider:

- An internet connection in your classroom, to watch the documentaries online together
- Screening a documentary in the classroom
- Assign the documentary search for homework. Other places students could look for Canadian documentaries are on TV or at the library: the CBC and other Canadian networks regularly show new Canadian docs

SENIOR GRADE Lesson Extension:

Have students explore the sub-genre of mockumentary. Assign one of the documentaries searched to be a mockumentary. In groups, students can come up with their own mockumentary ideas and work to create these as an independent project.

JOURNALING

For the REEL CANADA Canadian Film unit, you will keep a journal that your teacher may collect at the end.

Your journal is **your chance** to be creative and think about a topic or issue and express how you feel about it.

What is your opinion? What do you really think about something? How do you want to express that?

Your journal can take on any form you feel most comfortable with. Some people write their opinions, others draw, doodle, write poems, brainstorm, collage, make lists or create something totally new. This is your chance to **be yourself**. Every answer is right. Go for it. Start with the questions and see where they take you.

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Your journal can be a duotang, small binder or notebook .

Decorate the cover of your journal with pictures, drawings, words and photos that show what film means to you. At least 50% of the decorations should be Canadian content.

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If you are stuck on what to write, consider the **Three Rs of Journalling**:

- **Retell** – write in your own words what this topic is about or what you have experienced
- **Respond** – how this topic makes you feel and makes others feel
- **Relate** – how has this topic been part of your life

JOURNAL RUBRIC

	L1 (50 - 59)	L2 (60 - 69)	L3 (70 - 79)	L4 (80 -100)
Completion	2-3 entries complete	3-6 entries complete	7-10 entries complete	10- 13 entries complete
Effort	Very little	Some	Good	Outstanding
Depth of responses	Straight forward answers	Some thought and exploration	Thoughtful responses	Thoughtful and insightful responses
Decoration with 50% Can. Content	Quick job of decorating, no Can-con	Moderate decoration, some Can-con	Attractive decoration with 50% Can-con	Amazing looking journal with Can-con
Creativity	Entries are all the same	Some variety in entries	Entries are creative and interesting	Very Creative and varied entries

TEACHER FEEDBACK:

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Documentary Report

Documentary Title:

Film Maker & subject/topic	Aim or goal of the documentary	Possible viewpoint or bias
Personal response		What makes this documentary Canadian?